



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS
The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of
Homeland Security and Emergency Management
N.H. Department of Safety, John J. Barthelmes, Commissioner
33 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03305
1-800-852-3792
newsletters@hsem.nh.gov

June 2007



N.H. Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Christopher M. Pope was the keynote speaker at the third annual Local Emergency Preparedness Conference.

PREPAREDNESS CONFERENCE HELD IN MANCHESTER – The third annual Local Emergency Preparedness Conference was held June 18th at the Radisson Hotel in Manchester. About 350 participants from all over New Hampshire took part in the event, representing state and local government, health care organizations and a variety of other disciplines. Governor Lynch offered his congratulations and thanks to public safety workers, some of whom had been through three major floods in less than two years. The keynote speaker was Christopher M. Pope, Director of N.H. Homeland Security and Emergency Management. He brandished a section of stove pipe, and urged everyone in emergency management and public safety to “break down stovepipes” that prevent people and organizations from working effectively together to protect the public. Pope promised to award the stovepipe at next year’s conference to the person or organization that had done the most to eliminate stovepipes and promote cooperation.

Conference participants attended workshops on legal issues in emergency management, school emergency management planning, planning long-term recovery operations and continuity of operations planning. The conference was co-sponsored by N.H. Homeland Security and Emergency Management, N.H. Department of Health and Human Services, N.H. Health Officers Association, Community Health Institute and the N.H. Hospital Association.

TROPICAL SYSTEM BRINGS WILD WEATHER – Tropical Depression Barry didn't cut it as a hurricane, but that didn't stop it from bringing wild weather to New Hampshire on June 5th, including heavy rain, hail and high winds, including several reported funnel clouds. The National Weather Service posted severe thunderstorm watches or warnings for the entire state and a tornado warning for Strafford County. No significant damage was reported although Public Service Company of New Hampshire had power knocked out to 14,000 customers, mainly in southern Strafford County in the Rochester area and through Epping. Unitil and the N.H. Electric Co-op reported scattered outages. The state Emergency Operations Center was briefly activated to a Level 2 until the storm passed and it was clear that it caused no significant damage.

MINOR QUAKES SHAKE UP SEACOAST – A series of minor earthquakes rattled the Seacoast area, prompting dozens of calls to 911 from residents concerned that explosions were taking place. The quakes coincided with the smell of methane gas near Lafayette Road in Portsmouth, which heightened the concern. Increased levels of methane were detected, but its possible relation to the quakes, if any, was not clear. No damage or injuries were reported, but Portsmouth police set up a command post and went door to door checking on residents.

The quakes, all centered near Exeter, occurred on Saturday, June 2nd. A magnitude 1.9 quake occurred at 7:56 p.m., followed by a magnitude 1.4 at 10:35 p.m. and a 1.0 at 11:08 p.m., according to the Weston Observatory. Weston also reported a magnitude 1.4 quake in the same area at 10:10 a.m. on Friday, June 1st, but that appeared to have passed unnoticed. Media sources also reported another quake at 2:35 p.m. on Sunday, but that was not confirmed by Weston or the National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colo. Yet another quake of Magnitude 1.0 occurred on June 21st at 8:31 p.m., two miles north of Hampton.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY PLANNING BILL APPROVED – A new law requiring emergency planning in all New Hampshire public and non-public schools takes effect on July 1st. The measure give schools in the state two years to develop site-specific emergency plans that utilize the Incident Command System and that comply with the National Incident Management System. During testimony before the House and Senate Education Committees, HSEM Natural Hazards Officer Gregg Champlin noted that nearly all New Hampshire schools are already doing emergency planning in some fashion. This bill is intended to ensure that the planning is effective and meets emergency management standards. It also requires an exercise within one year of a plan's completion.

The law was supported by HSEM, the State Fire Marshal and the Department of Education.

N.H. HAMS PARTICIPATE IN AMATEUR RADIO FIELD DAY – Amateur radio operators from 12 local clubs took part in Field Day on June 23rd, testing their skills against ham operators across the country. The object is to make as many contacts as possible in 24 hours utilizing all amateur radio bands and all transmission modes, such as voice and Morse code. Hams set up their stations outdoors in tents and trailers and operated under emergency conditions. Participating in Field Day were the Central New Hampshire Amateur Radio Club, Twin State Radio Club, Nashua Area Radio Club, Port City ARC, Contoocook Valley ARC, East/West Coös County Group, Lakes Region Repeater Association, Great Bay Radio Association, Granite State ARC, White Mountain ARC, Cheshire County Radio Club and the Interstate Repeater Society.

LIGHTNING AWARENESS WEEK WARNS OF LIGHTNING DANGER – The National Weather Service has declared this week (June 24th – 30th) as Lightning Safety Awareness Week. Lightning is an underestimated killer. It kills an average of 66 people a year, more than tornadoes and hurricanes, but it gets less attention than those storms because it kills its victims one at a time and fatal incidents are usually not accompanied by massive destruction. There are an estimated 25 million lightning strikes every year in the U.S., and every one of them is a potential killer.

The Weather Service recommends: Plan ahead during summer activities and cancel or postpone outdoor events if storms start. Monitor the weather. Seek shelter when conditions warrant. If caught in a storm, avoid trees and poles or anything that can conduct electricity and get to shelter as soon as it is safely possible.

VERMONT YANKEE BACK ON LINE – Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, operated by Entergy Nuclear, is back on line after being shut down for refueling and maintenance work. The plant was shut down on May 12th and returned to the New England grid at 5:38 p.m. on June 6th. VY returned to full power operations several days later.

PIO TRAINING TO BE CONDUCTED AT N.H. FIRE ACADEMY – The N.H. Fire Academy is offering a two-and-a-half-day training course for beginning and less-experienced public information officers July 10th – 12th. The course covers basic communication skills including writing, interviewing and developing public information campaigns. It includes hands-on practice in developing these skills. There is no charge for the course. For more information call the Fire Academy at 1-800-371-4503.

HURRICANE PROMOTION BEGINS – HSEM is again conducting its hurricane chart promotion with WMUR-TV this hurricane season. Anytime there is an active storm in the forecast, WMUR meteorologists tell viewers they can receive a free hurricane chart and other information by contacting HSEM at hurricanes@HSEM.nh.gov or 33 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03305.